

and association outside the beltway has now been heard inside the beltway.

Americans have waited long enough. Congress has the first opportunity in a generation to clean up a political system that most Americans believe is polluted by campaign contributions, or the appearance of such pollution. There is no room for wavering or using a philosophical, legal or factual excuse for killing this legislation. This is a real chance to curb the role of money in politics.

It has been decades since Congress took similar comprehensive action with the enactment of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971. The one thing we cannot afford to do is wait any longer—now is the time to enact the Shays-Meehan/McCain-Feingold legislation. The American people have waited long enough!

I fully support this legislation as the best effort that Congress can make to enact real campaign finance reform. I stand ready to do what I can to make reform a reality in the 107th Congress.

I yield the floor.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may be allowed to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMENDING THE COURAGE OF INGRID BETANCOURT, CLARA ROJAS, MARTHA DANIELS, AND THE COLOMBIAN PEOPLE

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, just an hour or so ago, I made a call to Colombia, South America, and spoke with the husband of Ingrid Betancourt, who, as many may know, is the woman candidate for President of Colombia who was recently kidnapped.

I expressed to Ingrid Betancourt's husband the sincere hopes of all of us here that his wife be returned to safety soon, that she be allowed to continue in her efforts as a candidate in that country in the upcoming presidential election, and I told Mrs. Betancourt's family that the hopes and prayers of all of us in the United States are with them in these very difficult hours.

Colombia is a nation under tremendous stress and pressure, and the level of violence there has tremendously escalated since the collapse of the Pastrana-FARC peace talks. President Pastrana has tried his entire Presidency to come up with a peaceful resolution of the 40-year-old conflict in that country, and he deserves great

credit for the efforts he has made from the very first days of his Presidency up until just a few days ago, when those talks finally broke down completely.

Currently, rebel forces are doing everything in their power to compromise the fragile democracy of that country. Guerrillas have bombed electrical towers, bridges, and waterworks while mining highways and increasing the number of roadblocks on Colombia's streets. As a result, more than 110 towns, representing 10 percent of Colombia's urban centers, have been left in darkness, and 76 municipalities in 6 provinces have had their phone service cut out completely.

Colombian citizens are living each day in fear while enduring tremendous domestic hardship. President Pastrana has warned his people more attacks are likely, and the citizens of Colombia are frightened, to put it mildly.

Even worse, FARC rebels have undertaken a violent offensive against public figures, stepping up the frequency of political attacks that were already too common in the months before the collapse of the peace talks on February 20. For years, the FARC—the organization I described—and other rebel forces in Colombia, have financed their violent siege of terror by kidnapping Colombian citizens and demanding ransom. When the ransom is not paid, the hostages are killed, and new hostages are taken. It is a vicious cycle that repeats over and over again, taking a toll on the spirit of this beleaguered nation. Indeed, at this point close to 4,000 people have died in Colombia since the beginning of hostilities; kidnappings are about 3,000 a year. At the same time, rebel groups have executed several political figures, including mayors, judges, members of the legislature, and candidates. As elected officials ourselves, this is a development that we should be particularly enraged by, and one that should draw the attention and concern of all people in democratic countries around the globe.

On March 3, Martha Catalina Daniels, a Colombian Senator, was tortured and killed near Bogota by guerrilla fighters while attempting to negotiate the release of hostages kidnapped by leftist rebels. After her torture, she was shot at close range with two bullets to the head, and then dumped in a ravine off a country road. A staffer and a friend of Senator Daniels were also killed in this vicious attack against decency and democracy, not to mention the value of human life.

Senator Daniels was the fourth member of the Colombian Congress to be killed since the middle of last year while working in her elected capacity as a representative of the Colombian people. Could you imagine similar events happening in our Capitol? There would be tremendous public outcry, and the Government would respond swiftly and decisively. Just because this crime happened in conflict-torn Colombia does not mean that we should allow this execution to pass by

without public comment or outcry in this, the greatest Congress on the planet. We must stand with our democracy-loving colleagues around the world in condemning these attacks. This crime was a vicious and merciless murder of a dedicated and courageous public servant and her staff who were simply doing their jobs—jobs that we and our staffs do everyday. In recognition of this commitment, Senator Daniels' sacrifice will not be forgotten by the Colombian people or her friends in America. Her death will not be in vain.

Yet the assault on democracy in Colombia is not only targeted at those who hold office. Rebels also have targeted national candidates for public office as Colombia prepares for an upcoming presidential election. On February 23, Colombia presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt, and her chief of staff, Clara Rojas, were seized while driving toward the southern war zone of San Vicente del Caguan. Mrs. Betancourt's driver and two journalists accompanying her were held and released, but Mrs. Betancourt and Ms. Rojas were kept in custody—a clear sign that this kidnapping was intended to send a signal to the political class in Colombia. The FARC, who are believed to have perpetrated this crime, currently hold five other politicians hostage and are attempting to cripple democracy in this Nation by force. However, the Colombian Government rightly refuses to negotiate with these terrorists for fear that concessions would encourage even more kidnappings in the future, and the situation is presently at a standoff.

Mrs. Betancourt has been allowed to fax her family to assure them of her well-being, and she has expressed her concern for her family, friends, and country. Even now, as a prisoner, she stands by her democratic principles. As she suffers, she seeks to bring international attention to the problem of violence in Colombia through her plight. Mrs. Betancourt's daughter has stated that her mother has indicated her desire that people be conscious of what is happening in Colombia and recognize that a war is going on in that country every day. She seeks to use her own situation as a rallying point for the international community against violence in Colombia.

I spoke to Mrs. Betancourt's husband this afternoon, and expressed my sympathy to him and his family, and my admiration for his courageous wife, and expressed as well those same sentiments on behalf of all of us in this Chamber. I pray for her safe and quick return.

Attention in America is rightly focused on Afghanistan and the war against terrorism. However, we cannot allow the brave sacrifices of people like Ingrid Betancourt to go unnoticed. We have to reserve some of our attention to expend on the festering problems of Colombia. If we turn our backs on this corner of the world, I fear that we may see another situation arise like that

which we saw when we ignored Afghanistan after the Soviet occupation. We cannot and should not allow this to happen.

And so, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to be deeply aware of the sacrifices of people such as Martha Daniels, Ingrid Betancourt, and their staffs. They have paid the ultimate price for their commitment to democracy and have shown great courage by serving as politicians in such a volatile and strife-torn country. Their service is a testament to the democratic commitment of the vast majority of Colombian people, a commitment that was reconfirmed on March 11, when huge numbers of Colombians went to the polls even though they had been threatened with violence as they sought to execute their constitutionally given right to vote.

Colombia is a troubled country in desperate need of our assistance and the assistance of other democratic nations around the globe. But the spirit of democracy lives on in the dedicated public servants and citizens of our friend and neighbor to the South.

I want the Colombian Government, and more importantly the people of Colombia, to know their courage and sacrifice has been noted by the American people and by this individual in this body speaking. I am very confident, on behalf of all of us in this Chamber in urging the FARC and other organizations to cease in the abduction of political figures, to cease in the abduction of innocent civilians, in that country and to go back to the bargaining table and try to figure out a way to resolve this four-decade old conflict. The deaths and the abductions shredding this country deserve the attention of this Congress, the American people, and freedom-loving people everywhere.

I ask my colleagues to take an active interest in this problem and act as friends of Colombia. The Colombian people, people like Ingrid Betancourt and Martha Daniels, deserve no less.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I congratulate my colleague, Senator DODD, for a very eloquent and compelling statement in regard to the tragedies that are going on in Colombia today. I think he does very well in expressing the sentiments of all the Members of the Senate. I thank him for that eloquent comment.

Colombia must be looked at not just as a place we worry about in regard to drugs coming into this country, not just as a country that we have to partner with to try to deal with our mutual drug problem, the production of drugs, and the huge consumption of drugs in the United States, although we are partners in that effort, but we also must understand that what is going on in Colombia is a direct threat to the democracy of Colombia.

Senator DODD has spelled out very well what has been going on. We do have a longstanding democracy in this

hemisphere, a democracy that has been a friend of the United States for many years that is, in fact, imperiled. When we make a decision about what assistance we can and will give in the future, we need to keep that in mind.

(The remarks of Mr. DEWINE pertaining to the introduction of S. 2027 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the introduction of S. 2027 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DURBIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF RANDY CRANE TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 5:38 having arrived, the Senate will now go into executive session and proceed to the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 705, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Randy Crane, of Texas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Texas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Parliamentary inquiry, Mr. President. When is the vote scheduled?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. It is scheduled for 5:50 p.m.

Mr. LEAHY. Is there time reserved to the Senator from Vermont?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont has 6 minutes.

Mr. LEAHY. I understood the Senator from Vermont had 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time is divided equally between 5:38 and 5:50.

Mr. LEAHY. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, we are voting on our 42nd judicial nominee to be confirmed since last July when the Senate Judiciary Committee reorganized after the Senator majority changed. With the confirmation of Robert Randall Crane to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas—and I predict we will accept him—the Senate will have resolved 7 judicial emergencies since we returned to session a few short weeks ago, 14 judicial emergencies since I became chairman.

As of this week, the Senate has confirmed more judges in the last 9 months than were confirmed in 4 out of 6 years under the Republican leadership. I have heard some inaccurate statements—I am sure innocently enough but mistakenly—by my friends on the other side of the aisle. As of this week, we will have confirmed, in 9 months, more judges than were confirmed in 4 of the 6 total years under the Republican leadership. In fact, the number of judicial confirmations over these past 9 months exceeds the number of judicial nominees confirmed during all 12 months for the years 2000, 1999, 1997, and 1996.

During the 6½ years the Republicans controlled the Senate, judicial nominations averaged 38 a year. We have done more than that in 9 months. In the past 9 months, we have had more hearings for more nominees and had more confirmations than the Republican leadership did for President Clinton's nominees during the first 9 months of 1995.

On the chart we took 9-month increments. In the first 9 months that the Republicans led the committee, they had 9 hearings; we had 14; they confirmed 36 and we confirmed 42. Looking at the first 3 months of the session, we will have confirmed 14. During the first 3 months of each session they were in charge the following occurred: In March 1995, they confirmed 9; in March of 1996, they confirmed 0; by March of 1997, they confirmed 2; by March of 1998, the high-water mark, they had 12; by March of 1999, they had 0; by March of 2000, they had 7; by March of 2001, they had 0; we have done 14.

We tried to have a pace faster than the Republicans when they chaired the Judiciary Committee, when they controlled the Senate, and so far we have done that. Some have expressed concern how this Senate, under this leadership, has handled nominations of President Bush. So far he will have won 41 out of 42 nominations. As great as the football team is in Nebraska, they would be delighted to win 41 out of 42, as would any team.

In 1999, when the Republicans controlled the Senate, in the whole year, they confirmed 26 district judges and 7 circuit judges. In the year 2000, for the whole year, they confirmed 31 district judges and 8 circuit judges. In the first 6 months of last year, when they controlled the Senate, they had 0. In the past 9 months—remember, these are comparing whole years—in the past 9 months, we have had 35 district judges, 7 courts of appeal.

Take the average number of days between nomination and confirmation, figuring we have to wait extra time for the ABA: they took 182 one year; 212 days another year; 232, another; 178, another; 196, another. The Democrats average considerably less.

Reviewing today's nominations illustrates the effect of the reform process that the Democratic leadership has spearheaded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has used 6 minutes.